United Nations CEDAW/C/61/2

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
5 May 2015

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Sixty-first session
6-24 July 2015
Item 7 of the provisional agenda*
Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

Note by the secretariat

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Developments in the human rights regime	3
	A. Human rights treaty bodies	3
	B. Twenty-sixth meeting of Chairs of human rights treaty bodies	4
	C. Treaty body strengthening	6
	D. Security Council	7
	E. General Assembly	9
	F. Human Rights Council	11
III.	Working methods of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	12
	A. Working methods	12
	B. Concluding observations	13
	C. Follow-up	13
	D. Communications	14
	E. General recommendations	14

Note: The present document is being issued in English, French and Spanish only.
* CEDAW/C/61/1.

15-07064 (E) 270515

Please recycle

F. Inquiries 15

IV. Reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions 15

Annexes

I. States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention 16

II. States parties whose reports have been submitted but not yet scheduled as at 1 May 2015 ... 17

I. Introduction

1. The present report contains information relevant to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Section II contains information on developments in the human rights regime, including the human rights treaty bodies, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. Section III relates to working methods of the Committee and other relevant issues. Section IV provides information on reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions and on reports that have been received but not scheduled for consideration. A list of States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is contained in annex I to the present report. Annex II contains a list of States parties whose reports had been submitted but not yet considered or scheduled for consideration by the Committee as at 1 May 2015.

II. Developments in the human rights regime

A. Human rights treaty bodies

2. The Human Rights Committee held its 111th session from 7 to 25 July 2014, its 112th session from 7 to 31 October 2014 and its 113th session from 16 March to 2 April 2015. At its 112th session, the Committee adopted its general comment No. 35 on article 9 (liberty and security of person) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The purpose of the general comment is to provide appropriate and authoritative guidance to States parties and other actors on the measures to be adopted to ensure full compliance with the rights protected under that provision. The general comment replaces general comment No. 8, adopted in 1982, and covers a wide range of issues under article 9, including the definition of arbitrary detention and the procedural safeguards necessary for avoiding unlawful and arbitrary detention.

3. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights held its fifty-second, fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions from 28 April to 23 May 2014, from 10 to 28 November 2014 and from 23 February to 6 March 2015. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee adopted a statement on social protection floors (E/C.12/2015/1). Work is under way on a general comment on article 7 (just and favourable conditions of work) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee will have a day of general discussion on the draft general comment on 16 June 2015, during its fifty-fifth session.

4. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination held its eighty-fifth session from 11 to 29 August 2014. The Committee reviewed, among other things, the periodic reports of Iraq, Japan and the United States of America and adopted a decision on Iraq under its early warning and urgent action procedure.

5. The Committee against Torture held its fifty-second and fifty-third sessions from 28 April to 23 May 2014 and from 3 to 28 November 2014. During the former session, the Committee discussed the issue of reprisals against persons who cooperate with United Nations bodies, on the basis of a statement adopted by the Committee at its fifty-first session (CAT/C/51/3). At the latter session, the Committee held a joint workshop with the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture

and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and with the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment on gender-sensitive monitoring and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).

6. The Committee on the Rights of the Child held its sixty-sixth, sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth sessions from 26 May to 13 June 2014, from 1 to 19 September 2014 and from 12 to 30 January 2015. During its sixty-seventh session, the Committee held a day of general discussion on digital media and children's rights, the purpose of which was to better understand the effects of children's engagement with social media and information and communications technology and the role of children's rights in that area, and to develop rights-based strategies to maximize online opportunities for children while protecting them from risks and possible harm. At its sixty-eighth session, the Committee continued its work on three general comments pertaining to public spending to realize children's rights, to adolescents and to children in street situations.

7. The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families held its twenty-first and twenty-second sessions from 1 to 5 September 2014 and from 13 to 24 April 2015. At the former session, the Committee began the drafting of a general comment on children in the context of migration. At the latter session, the Committee issued a statement regarding the tragedies in the Mediterranean involving the loss of life of hundreds of migrants.

8. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held its twelfth and thirteenth sessions from 15 September to 3 October 2014 and from 25 March to 17 April 2015. At the latter session, the Committee held a day of general discussion on the right to education of persons with disabilities and continued its work on a general comment on article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on women with disabilities.

9. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances held its seventh and eighth sessions from 15 to 26 September 2014 and from 2 to 13 February 2015. At the latter session, the Committee discussed the possibility of elaborating a general comment on the scope of article 3 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, on the investigation of acts of enforced disappearance committed by non-State actors.

B. Twenty-sixth meeting of Chairs of human rights treaty bodies

10. The twenty-sixth meeting of Chairs of human rights treaty bodies was held in Geneva from 23 to 27 June 2014, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/202. The Chairs considered the implementation of Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, and the follow-up to the recommendations made at their previous meeting, including the application by treaty bodies of the simplified reporting procedure, the alignment of the methodology for constructive dialogue with States parties and a common format for short, focused and specific concluding observations. Three notes had been prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as background to the discussions (HRI/MC/2014/2, HRI/MC/2014/3 and HRI/MC/2014/4). The Chairs held informal

consultations with States parties regarding resolution 68/268, during which they expressed their readiness to align the distinct working methods, based on good practices, and to make their procedures more efficient, taking into account the distinct nature of each treaty. They also held informal consultations with civil society organizations and the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and met representatives of the Special Procedures Branch and the Universal Periodic Review Branch of OHCHR to discuss complementarities of the work of the two mechanisms. The report of the meeting, including the decisions and recommendations, is contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of human rights instruments (A/69/285).

11. Some of the more pertinent decisions and recommendations of the Chairs included the reaffirmation of the previously recognized role of the Chairs in coordinating common activities, including the consideration and adoption of joint statements. The Chairs also reiterated the decision taken at previous meetings that they should adopt measures on working methods and procedural matters that were common across the treaty body system and that had been discussed previously within each committee, and that such measures should be implemented by all treaty bodies unless a committee subsequently dissociated itself therefrom. The Chairs welcomed the outcome of the work of the General Assembly on treaty body strengthening, as reflected in its resolution 68/268, and considered that, in accordance with the resolution, all savings generated from the implementation of the resolution and additional resources should be made available to the treaty bodies so as to supplement existing budgetary and extrabudgetary resources. They sought clarification regarding the future arrangements with regard to meeting time and staff support.

12. The Chairs endorsed the call by the General Assembly in paragraph 1 of its resolution 68/268 to make the simplified reporting procedure available to States. They drew attention to the practice of the Committee against Torture and the Human Rights Committee in establishing country-specific reporting guidance (lists of issues prior to reporting) and invited the treaty bodies to consider revising their existing reporting guidelines with a view to ensuring that States parties were able to conform to the word limits set out in paragraph 16 of the resolution. While underlining the need for the treaty bodies to have flexibility in conducting the dialogue and drafting their concluding observations in accordance with the specificities of their mandates, the Chairs invited the committees to consider adopting both the guidance note for States parties on the constructive dialogue with the human rights treaty bodies and the common framework for the concluding observations (A/69/285, annexes I and II).

13. The Chairs strongly condemned intimidation and reprisals against persons seeking to engage with the treaty bodies and invited all treaty bodies that had not yet done so to establish a rapporteur for reprisals who would take the steps necessary to prevent, protect against, investigate and pursue accountability for acts of intimidation or reprisals. They decided to include reprisals as a standing item on the agenda of their annual meeting and to develop and adopt at their twenty-seventh meeting a joint treaty body policy against reprisals, with a view to developing a system-wide approach.

14. The Chairs decided that, in accordance with the principle of rotation and inclusion of new committees in the list, the Chair-Rapporteur of the twenty-seventh meeting, in 2015, would be the Chair of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, and the Vice-Chair-Rapporteur would be the Chair of the Human Rights Committee.

15. From 16 to 18 January 2015, the Chairs held an informal meeting at Wilton Park, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268, as well as the agenda for their twenty-seventh meeting. They also adopted joint statements on the post-2015 development agenda and on human rights against violence, with the latter addressing the increase in attacks, atrocities and human rights violations due to extremism.

C. Treaty body strengthening

16. At its fifty-eighth, fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was informed about the status of implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268, in particular with regard to the common working methods and approaches endorsed by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies at their twenty-sixth meeting pertaining to the simplified reporting procedure, the constructive dialogue and the concluding observations, as well as a common policy on reprisals.

17. As regards the call by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/268, which was supported by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies at their twenty-sixth meeting, to make available to States parties a simplified reporting procedure, eight treaty bodies agreed in principle to offer the procedure to States parties. Four treaty bodies, namely, the Committee against Torture, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Migrant Workers and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, were already offering or had already decided to offer the simplified reporting procedure before the adoption of the resolution. Since the adoption of the resolution and the recommendation by the Chairs on the subject at their twenty-sixth meeting, four more treaty bodies have decided to make the simplified reporting procedure available, namely, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (with certain modalities and after reduction of the backlog), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (on a pilot or trial basis as from the third periodic report), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (on a pilot or trial basis) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (for reports more than five years overdue).

18. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided to offer, on a pilot basis, the simplified reporting procedure for overdue periodic reports as from 1 January 2015, provided that the States parties concerned had submitted an updated common core document in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties. The common core document should date back no more than five years, or less if there have been significant political and/or socioeconomic changes in the State party concerned during the five-year period. The Committee also decided to limit the questionnaire for the simplified reporting procedure to 25 questions, referred to as the list of issues prior to reporting. The simplified reporting procedure does not apply to the

Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment or to the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, which have no reporting procedure or no periodic reporting procedure, respectively.

19. Since the twenty-sixth meeting of the Chairs, six treaty bodies, namely, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee against Torture, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on Migrant Workers, have adopted or endorsed the guidance note for States parties on the constructive dialogue with the human rights treaty bodies, with reservations expressed by some treaty body members in the case of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Human Rights Committee decided to update its own guidance note, taking into account the guidance note recommended by the Chairs. Three treaty bodies (the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Migrant Workers) considered the guidance note and deemed that their practice was already in line with it. In March 2015, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted the guidance note on the understanding that it would continue to hold its constructive dialogue with States parties in two consecutive meetings on one and the same day. The recommendations of the Chairs relating to the constructive dialogue do not apply to the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

20. Seven treaty bodies, namely, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on Migrant Workers, have adopted the framework for the concluding observations endorsed by the Chairs at their twenty-sixth annual meeting. In March 2015, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted the framework, on the understanding that the practice of the Committee is that only issues discussed during the constructive dialogue with the State party concerned may be raised in the concluding observations. The recommendations of the Chairs relating to the concluding observations do not apply to the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

D. Security Council

21. The Security Council adopted various resolutions in which it emphasized the importance of the participation of women in public and political life, in particular during conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. In its resolution 2190 (2014) on the situation in Liberia, the Council called upon the Government of Liberia to continue to support the participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, including in decision-making roles in post-conflict governance institutions and the broad range of reform efforts. In its resolution 2180 (2014) on the situation in Haiti, the Council recalled its resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013) and encouraged the Government of Haiti, with the support of relevant stakeholders, to promote the increased political participation of women in Haiti, in accordance with the Constitution. In its resolution 2169 (2014)

on the situation in Iraq, the Council reaffirmed the key role that women could play in re-establishing the fabric of society and stressed the need for their full political participation, including in peace and political decision-making processes and the development of national strategies in order to take into account their perspectives. In its resolution 2164 (2014) on the situation in Mali, the Council requested the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the Malian authorities in ensuring the full and effective participation, involvement and representation of women at all levels and at an early stage of the stabilization phase, including the security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, as well as in the national political dialogue, reconciliation and electoral processes.

22. The Security Council also adopted several resolutions relating to its agenda on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. In its resolution 2199 (2015), the Council condemned in the strongest terms abductions of women and children, expressed outrage at their exploitation and abuse, including rape, sexual abuse and forced marriage, committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Nusrah Front and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida, and encouraged all State and non-State actors with evidence to bring it to the attention of the Council, along with any information that human trafficking might support the perpetrators financially. In its resolution 2195 (2014), the Council noted the importance of incorporating the participation of women and young people in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

23. The Security Council also adopted several resolutions relating to its agenda on the maintenance of international peace and security. In its resolution 2151 (2014), the Council underscored the importance of the equal and effective participation and full involvement of women in all stages of the security sector reform process, given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding, and in strengthening civilian protection measures in security services, including the provision of adequate training for security personnel, the inclusion of more women in the security sector and effective vetting processes in order to exclude perpetrators of sexual violence from the security sector. In its resolution 2171 (2014), the Council emphasized the important role that women and civil society, including women's organizations and formal and informal community leaders, could play in exerting influence over parties to armed conflict and reiterated the continuing need to increase success in preventing conflict by increasing the participation of women at all stages of mediation and post-conflict resolution and by increasing the consideration of gender-related issues in all discussions pertinent to conflict prevention.

24. In its resolution 2210 (2015) on the situation in Afghanistan, the Security Council decided that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, within their mandate and in a manner consistent with Afghan sovereignty, leadership and ownership, would continue, with the support of OHCHR, to assist in the full implementation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights provisions of the Constitution of Afghanistan and international treaties to which Afghanistan was a party, in particular those regarding the full enjoyment by women of their human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women. The Council welcomed the commitment by the Government of Afghanistan to strengthening the participation of women in political life and in all governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service, and supported efforts to accelerate the full implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan. The Council recalled that women played a vital role in the peace process, as recognized in its resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions, reiterated the need for their full, equal and effective participation at all stages of peace processes and urged their involvement in the development and implementation of post-conflict strategies in order to take account of their perspectives and needs.

25. The Security Council also adopted numerous other country-specific resolutions making reference to, among other things, gender equality, gender-based discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence and impunity, and justice and the protection of human rights, with a special focus on the rights of women and children.[1]

E. General Assembly

26. In its resolution 69/181 on the right to development, the General Assembly recognized the important role and the rights of women and the application of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in the process of realizing the right to development and noted the positive relationship between the education of women and their equal participation in the civil, cultural, economic, political and social activities of the community and the promotion of the right to development. In its resolution 69/143 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of its twenty-fourth special session, the Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all development efforts, recognizing that they were critical for efforts to improve women's access to all resources needed for the full exercise of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

27. In its resolution 69/156 on child, early and forced marriage, the General Assembly called upon States, with the participation of relevant stakeholders, including girls, religious and community leaders, civil society, women's and human rights groups, men and boys and youth organizations, to develop and implement holistic, comprehensive and coordinated responses and strategies to eliminate child, early and forced marriage and to support already married girls, adolescents and women, including through the strengthening of child protection systems, protection mechanisms such as safe shelters, access to justice and the sharing of best practices across borders. In its resolution 69/150 on intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation, the Assembly called upon States parties to

[1] For example, see Security Council resolutions 2155 (2014), 2156 (2014), 2173 (2014), 2179 (2014), 2187 (2014), 2205 (2015) and 2206 (2015) on the situation in the Sudan and South Sudan, 2157 (2014), 2186 (2014) and 2203 (2015) on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, 2158 (2014), 2182 (2014) and 2184 (2014) on the situation in Somalia, 2162 (2014) on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, 2191 (2014) on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic 2196 (2015) on the situation in the Central African Republic and 2198 (2015) and 2211 (2015) on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant international human rights instruments. In both resolutions, the Assembly recognized the need to give due consideration to both issues in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

28. In its resolution 69/229 on international migration and development, the General Assembly recognized the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of migrant women and girls by, among other things, incorporating a gender perspective into policies and strengthening national laws, institutions and programmes to combat gender-based violence, including trafficking in persons and discrimination against women and girls. In its resolution 69/167 on the protection of migrants, the Assembly recognized that women migrant workers were important contributors to social and economic development in countries of origin and destination. It encouraged States to implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes for women migrant workers and to facilitate their productive employment, decent work and integration into the labour force, including in the fields of education and science and technology.

29. In its resolution 69/147 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, the General Assembly reaffirmed that discrimination on the basis of sex was contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international human rights instruments and that its elimination was a cross-cutting issue and an integral part of efforts towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women. The Assembly welcomed the efforts and contributions at the local, national, regional and international levels to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and encouraged States to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto.

30. In its resolution 69/149 on trafficking in women and girls, the General Assembly urged Governments to ensure that the prevention of and responses to trafficking in persons continued to take into account the specific needs of women and girls and their participation in and contribution to all phases of preventing and responding to trafficking, especially in addressing specific forms of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation. The Assembly called upon Governments to intensify their efforts to address the demand that fostered the trafficking of women and girls for all forms of exploitation. It invited States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenants on Human Rights to include information and disaggregated statistics on trafficking in women and girls as part of their national reports to their respective committees.

31. In its resolution 69/61 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, the General Assembly recognized the valuable contribution of women to practical disarmament measures. The Assembly urged Member States to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in organizations in the field of disarmament at the local, national, subregional and regional levels and to promote equal opportunities for the representation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Assembly requested the relevant United Nations organs, agencies,

funds and programmes to assist States, upon request, in promoting the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It encouraged States parties to fully implement all the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty, including the provision on serious acts of gender-based violence, and requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on ways and means of promoting the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the resolution.

F. Human Rights Council

32. At the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council, held from 10 to 27 June 2014, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences presented her report (A/HRC/26/38 and addenda). She focused broadly on developments in the United Nations on the subject over some 20 years with a view to providing a snapshot view of the developments, including the expanding conceptualization of the subject. The analysis of continuing challenges was underpinned by the work of the Special Rapporteur, as identified through thematic reports, country missions and participation in conferences and meetings.

33. Also at the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, presented her report (A/HRC/26/37 and Add.1-11), in which she provided an overview of her activities from 1 March 2013 to 1 March 2014. The report comprised a thematic analysis of the first decade of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. She provided an overview of the mandate and outlined substantive areas of focus throughout its existence. She summarized the achievements of the anti-trafficking movement that she has guided, and to which she has contributed, and identified challenges in developing rights-based responses to trafficking, drawing on the responses of States and of partners to a questionnaire that she sent. The report contained the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on how the mandate holder could further contribute to the global movement against human trafficking. On 16 June 2014, the Council held a high-level panel discussion on the identification of good practices in combating female genital mutilation, in accordance with its decision 24/117.

34. Also at that session, on 17 June 2014 the Human Rights Council held its annual full-day discussion on women's human rights, in accordance with its resolution 6/30. The discussion was divided into two panel discussions, one on the impact of gender stereotypes on the recognition and enjoyment of women's human rights and the other on the intersections between the realization of women's rights and the achievement of sustainable development, building on the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session, in 2013, and the discussions of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, on 23 June 2014 the Council held a panel discussion on preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage, with a particular focus on challenges, achievements, best practices and implementation gaps, in accordance with its resolution 24/23.

35. At its twenty-seventh session, held from 8 to 16 September 2014, the Human Rights Council held a panel discussion on the integration of a gender perspective into its country-focused work, including its geographic special procedures and the establishment and reports of commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions. In its resolution 27/21, the Council appointed anew special rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. In its landmark resolution 27/32 on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to update the report entitled "Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity" (A/HRC/19/41) with a view to sharing good practices and ways to overcome violence and discrimination in application of existing international human rights law and standards. During the session, the Council also requested the High Commissioner to, among other things, prepare a follow-up report on how the technical guidance on the application of a human-rights based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity had been applied by States and other relevant actors (see resolution 27/11), a report on the practical application of the technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce and eliminate preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age (see resolution 27/14) and a compilation of good practices and major challenges in preventing and eliminating female genital mutilation (see resolution 27/22).

36. At its twenty-eighth session, held from 2 to 27 March 2015, the Human Rights Council decided to create mandates for a special rapporteur on the right to privacy (see resolution 28/16) and for an independent expert on the enjoyment of human rights of persons with albinism (see resolution 28/6). The Council extended mandates relating to cultural rights, environment and private military companies and established a forum on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, all of which were for an initial period of three years.

III. Working methods of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

A. Working methods

37. At its fifty-eighth session, the Committee adopted a statement on the situation of women in Gaza. In its decision 58/II, the Committee decided to offer, on a pilot basis, the simplified reporting procedure to those States parties that wished to avail themselves of the procedure for the submission of their periodic reports as from 1 January 2015.

38. At its fifty-ninth session, the Committee decided to entrust its pre-sessional working group, to be convened after each regular session, with the preparation of draft lists of issues prior to reporting under the simplified reporting procedure, to be approved, in the pilot phase, by the Committee at its following regular session, and to limit the number of questions in those lists to a maximum of 25. In addition to the criteria stipulated in its decision 58/II, the Committee decided that, in the pilot phase, the simplified reporting procedure would be offered only to States parties

whose periodic reports (not initial reports or initial reports combined with periodic reports) were overdue and that the number of lists of issues prior to reporting to be adopted per year might be limited during the pilot phase, based on the resource constraints faced by the Committee and its secretariat.

39. At the same session, the Committee decided to amend rule 24 of its rules of procedure to limit its working languages to English, French and Spanish, as well as Arabic on an exceptional basis, during the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016. It also decided to establish, on a pilot basis, a working group on inquiries under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, consisting of five members of the Committee and reflecting equitable geographical representation, to replace the Committee's Task Force on Inquiries. The Committee decided that the Working Group would meet for six days per year, within existing resources, to examine information received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol. It decided to review the decision after two years.

40. Also at its fifty-ninth session, the Committee decided to make public and publish on the website of OHCHR the full report of an inquiry setting out the Committee's findings, comments and recommendations upon the completion of all proceedings relating to the conduct of the inquiry, as well as the expiry of the time limit pursuant to article 8 (4) of the Optional Protocol.

41. At its sixtieth session, the Committee, while reaffirming its commitment to the protection of individuals who communicated with it, decided to mandate its Chair and Bureau to deal with cases of allegations of ill-treatment, intimidation, harassment or other reprisals against individuals as a consequence of their communicating or seeking to communicate with it. Accordingly, the Committee decided that the Chair, at the request of the Bureau, would bring the matter to the attention of the State party concerned and seek from it written explanations and/or clarifications in relation to allegations received that the State party had failed to ensure that individuals under its jurisdiction were not subjected to any such reprisals.

B. Concluding observations

42. At its sixtieth session, the Committee decided to adopt the common framework for the concluding observations of the human rights treaty bodies, as recommended by the Chairs of the treaty bodies at their twenty-sixth meeting (A/69/285, annex II), on the understanding that the practice of the Committee is that only issues discussed during the constructive dialogue with the State party concerned may be raised in the concluding observations.

C. Follow-up

43. At its fifty-ninth session, the Committee decided to appoint Xiaoqiao Zou as Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and Hilary Gbedemah as an alternate, both for two years, until 31 December 2016.

D. Communications

44. Concerning individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Committee adopted final decisions with regard to two communications at its fifty-eighth session, three communications at its fifty-ninth session and two communications at its sixtieth session.

E. General recommendations

45. At its fifty-ninth session, the Committee adopted joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices. It also adopted general recommendation No. 32 on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women.

46. Currently, the Committee is working on several general recommendations:

(a) *Draft general recommendation on women's access to justice*. At its sixtieth session, the Committee held another first reading of the draft general recommendation;

(b) *Draft general recommendation on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change*. At the sixtieth session of the Committee, the working group on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change met the inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to discuss coordination and procedures in relation to a draft concept note. It is expected that the concept note will be proposed by the working group for endorsement by the Committee at its sixty-second session. A day of general discussion is tentatively scheduled for the sixty-third session;

(c) *Draft general recommendation on rural women*. The working group on rural women met during the sixtieth session of the Committee and discussed a first draft of the general recommendation, which will be shared with other stakeholders between sessions;

(d) *Draft general recommendation on girls' and women's right to education*. During the fifty-eighth session of the Committee, the working group on the right to education held a half-day general discussion on girls' and women's right to education, with support from the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as part of the first phase in the elaboration of a general recommendation on the right to education under article 10 of the Convention;

(e) *Update to general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women*. At its sixtieth session, the Committee decided to update its general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, with support from the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section of OHCHR, and to establish an open-ended working group for that purpose.

F. Inquiries

47. During the reporting period, four submissions requesting inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol were received by the Committee and registered by the secretariat pursuant to the rules of procedure of the Committee. Two inquiries are currently pending with the Committee. At its fifty-fifth and fifty-eighth sessions, the Committee adopted its findings and recommendations in relation to inquiries No. 2010/1, concerning the Philippines, and No. 2011/1, concerning Canada, and in each case decided to transmit them to the State party concerned. At its fifty-ninth session, the Committee decided to make public and publish on the website of OHCHR the full report of an inquiry setting out the Committee's findings, comments and recommendations upon the completion of all proceedings relating to the conduct of the inquiry, as well as the expiry of the time limit pursuant to article 8 (4) of the Optional Protocol. At its sixtieth session, the Committee decided to include a summary of inquiry No. 2010/1, including its findings and recommendations, in its annual report to the General Assembly, and concluded the proceedings in relation to inquiry 2011/1.[2]

IV. Reports to be considered by the Committee at future sessions

48. States parties' reports have been scheduled up to and including the sixty-fourth session of the Committee, to be held in July 2016. The secretariat has sent notes verbales requesting the States parties concerned to confirm their attendance at the sessions at which they are scheduled. In addition to preferences by the States parties, the secretariat gives due consideration to geographic distribution and gives priority to initial reports, where possible. It is important to note that Member States and other strategic partners have commented favourably on the advanced scheduling of States parties before the Committee, which allows adequate time for preparing for the constructive dialogues between the States parties concerned and the Committee. It also provides adequate notice for other stakeholders to provide input to the reporting process. The following States parties are scheduled for the sixty-first session, in July 2015: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Croatia, Gambia, Namibia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Spain and Viet Nam. The following States parties are scheduled for the sixty-second session, to be held in October/November 2015: Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen. The following States parties are scheduled for the sixty-third session, to be held in February/March 2016: Czech Republic, Iceland, Japan, Haiti, Mongolia, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania and Vanuatu. The following States parties are scheduled for the sixty-fourth session, to be held in July 2016: Albania, Argentina, France, Mali, Myanmar, Philippines, Turkey and Trinidad and Tobago.

[2] The summary of inquiry No. 2010/1 and the report of inquiry No. 2011/1 and the State party's observations thereon are available under the symbols CEDAW/C/OP.8/PHL/1, CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/1 and CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/2, respectively.

Annex I

States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention

Africa

Somalia

Sudan

Asia and the Pacific

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Niue

Palau (signed on 20 September 2011)

Tonga

Western Europe and other

Holy See

United States of America (signed on 17 July 1980)

Annex II

States parties whose reports have been submitted but not yet scheduled as at 1 May 2015

State party	*Date due*	*Date received*	*Previously considered (session)*	*Previous report(s)*
Armenia				
Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports	13 October 2013	11 March 2015	2009 (43)	28 December 2007 (combined third and fourth periodic reports)
Bangladesh				
Eighth periodic report	February 2015	14 April 2015	2011 (48)	19 January 2010 (combined sixth and seventh periodic reports)
Bhutan				
Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports	30 September 2014	6 March 2015	2009 (44)	3 August 2007 (seventh periodic report)
Canada				
Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports	9 December 2014	2 April 2015	2008 (42)	4 May 2007 (combined sixth and seventh periodic reports)
Estonia				
Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports	20 November 2012	24 March 2015	2007 (39)	5 October 2005 (fourth periodic report)
Honduras				
Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports	2 April 2012	27 February 2015	2007 (39)	31 January 2006 (combined fourth to sixth periodic reports)
Netherlands				
Sixth periodic report	February 2014	28 October 2014	2010 (45)	15 August 2008 (fifth periodic report)
Sri Lanka				
Eighth periodic report	February 2015	30 April 2015	2011 (48)	31 July 2009 (combined fifth to seventh periodic reports)

State party	*Date due*	*Date received*	*Previously considered (session)*	*Previous report(s)*
Switzerland				
Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports	26 April 2014	25 February 2015	2009 (44)	18 April 2008 (third periodic report)
Uruguay				
Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports	8 November 2014	16 January 2015	2008 (42)	8 June 2007 (combined fourth to seventh periodic reports)